

CAUSE OF WRECK

RAILROAD OFFICIALS FIX BLAME ON CREW OF SPECIAL TRAIN.

**Gen. Supt. J. Q. Van Winkle Declares
Men in Charge Should Have Had
Train Under Control.**

WITNESSES BEFORE CORONER

FIXING RESPONSIBILITY.

**Testimony of Twenty-Four Shows that
Special Was Running at Least
Thirty Miles an Hour.**

INJURED ARE DOING WELL

IN OPTIMISTIC VEIN,

**Hendricks Johnson, of Evansville,
and L. G. Smith, of Lafayette, in the
Most Serious Condition.**

The officials of the Big Four railroad who have been conducting an investigation since Sunday, fix the blame of Saturday's accident on the special train which carried the Purdue students. The officials arrived at this conclusion, finally, after completing the work of taking testimony yesterday evening.

"There is no question in my mind," said General Superintendent J. Q. Van Winkle last night, "but that the special train crew was to blame for the accident. It was run-

The investigation was conducted by Superintendent Paquette, of the Chicago division, and General Superintendent Varnum, of the Rock Island division, at Winke. The work of taking testimony began Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock and was concluded yesterday evening. The crews of both trains were examined. The train dispatcher at Kankakee is exonerated from blame.

The consensus of opinion among railroad men is that the accident was caused by

ning too fast to be under any sort of control. Yardmaster Hicks says it is a rule of the yard for engineers running extra trains to fairly feel their way through the yards when there is a possibility of colliding with other trains. Superintendent Van Winkle declined to say what action

The investigation of the cause of the wreck which was responsible for the killing of sixteen students of Purdue University and Lafayette people and the severe injuries of forty others, was begun yesterday morning at 9 o'clock in the coroner's office in the Marion county courthouse. Coroner Harry D. Deville spent the first day examining witnesses and the wreck and in endeavoring to throw light upon the circumstances.

Twenty-four men were placed on the stand during the day. All of these lived in the neighborhood of the wreck or were employed in some capacity near-by. Their statements, for the most part, were devoted to the speed of the Purdue express train and the wreck which was causing a train to be stopped from the north direction was mostly from the north direction.

the appearance of the two trains as they crashed together, the removal of the dead and injured and such incidents of the wreck as came under their notice.

OFFICIALS TESTIFY TO-DAY.

The officials of the Big Four Railroad Company in this city did not appear before the coroner yesterday as they had not been subpoenaed. They will appear to-day and will be placed on the stand to answer questions concerning the orders given Conductor Frank M. Johnson, of the special train, Eugene Sherman, of the regular

Conductor Acres, of the switching train and Engineer Smith, of the switching train, as to the practice of the road in running special trains, particularly inside the city limits; as to the custom in operating switching trains within the city limits; as to the speed at which both trains were moving and various other queries of a technical nature.

be no difficulty in fixing the responsibility for a catastrophe so terrible as the one of Saturday morning. He is convinced that the blame can be laid with absolute certainty upon one or more employees of the railroad company. The facts that two trains were approaching each other from opposite directions on the main track, that the special train was running at a speed variously estimated at from twenty-five to forty miles an hour—far in excess of the limit fixed by the city ordinance—convince him that blundering was done of such nature as to be easily apparent during the investigation.

TWENTY-FOUR EXAMINED.

yesterday in an examination, which began at 9 o'clock in the morning and ended at 12 in the afternoon. They were: Arthur A. Bickling, Clerk & Roberts, Ray, C. H. C.

Illinois street car barns; Jesse C. Moore, general manager Columbia School Supply Company; Jesse Omar Kleinsmith, Columbia School Supply Company; Louis M.

Cann, Columbia School Supply Company
Frank Arbuckle, Clark & Roberts; Ben
Scribner, Clark & Roberts; J. W. McNary
Marion county heat and water plant; Wa-
ter Stevens, Marion county heat and wa-
ter plant; Matt Brady, Marion county heat and
water plant; H. L. Dither, Polar Ice Com-
pany; S. H. Burford, Marion County Heat
and Water Company, George Benter
Marion County Heat and Water Company
Fred H. Cook, Marion county heat and

The principal result of the investigation was to determine that the special train was running at least thirty miles an hour when it crashed. The testimony of all these witnesses agrees in the main on that point. Many of them told the coroner that they were surprised to see so large a train speeding through the city at that velocity.

A. A. BARNES TESTIFIES.

A. A. Barnes, president of the U. S. works, in North Indianapolis, testified that he was standing at the rear of his office when he heard the roar of the special train and looked up. It was about

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5, COL. A.)